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Contact: Clinton Campbell (360) 902-2071

Tonia Buell (360) 586-8482

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

P.O. Box 42560, Olympia, Washington 98504-2560

No citrus longhorned beetles found in first trees cut in Tukwila; open house set June 19

OLYMPIA – No evidence of the citrus longhorned beetle was found in the first eight trees cut down and inspected by state entomologists in Tukwila last week. State Department of Agriculture employees used chain saws June 12 and 13 to cut the trees down and into two-inch-thick slices. These were inspected for tunnels that would be created by beetle larvae as larvae fed on the heartwood of hardwood trees over the past year.

“Although no evidence was found in the first trees, some of the five citrus longhorned beetles that escaped last summer could easily have laid eggs in other area host trees,” said Clinton Campbell, manager of the department’s Pest Program. “Based on scientific studies, more than 90 percent of the beetle larvae should be within 1/8 mile of where the adult beetles escaped,” Campbell noted. “We don’t know which trees the beetles may be in, but we do know we want to stop this beetle before it can spread.”

Campbell says the goal of the tree removal effort is to kill beetle larvae feeding inside the trees before they emerge as adult beetles, mate, lay eggs and spread. “That would mean larger quarantine areas and larger tree removal areas,” Campbell said.

Efforts continue in planning the removal of the estimated 1,000 hardwood trees that are within 1/8th mile of a fenced-off area in a Tukwila nursery at the intersection of Macadam Road S. and S. 144th St. Trees would be removed between late June and early August. The only known way to kill the citrus longhorned beetle is to cut down and chip the trees the larvae are in.

The eight trees, including alders, maples, and cherry, were cut first because a citrus longhorned beetle was seen flying into the wooded area last August.

Tree replacement program

The department is developing a program to replace trees it cuts down, with special attention to those removed from yards, gardens, and environmentally sensitive areas. The Washington Forest Protection Association, U.S. Forest Service, and the Washington State Nursery and Landscape Association are among the groups partnering with WSDA on tree replacement.

To date, 700 trees, consisting of 500 Douglas firs and 200 western red cedars, have been donated to the tree-replacement effort and \$100,000 in federal grant money has been earmarked for replacing trees. A voucher system is being

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developed that would provide maximum flexibility, within guidelines, to property owners in deciding what kind of vegetation would replace removed trees.

Open House this Wednesday

State and federal officials will provide the latest information on the state's response to the beetle infestation at an open house to be held Wednesday (June 19). It takes place between 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Showalter Middle School, 4628 S. 144th St.

Last August three citrus longhorned beetles were captured in Tukwila, including a mated female ready to lay up to 200 eggs. Evidence was found that another five beetles escaped into the environment. These eight beetles were the first citrus longhorned beetles to be found out-of-doors in the U.S. and are related to the Asian longhorned beetle that has caused the destruction of thousands of trees in New York and Chicago.

A quarantine was established Nov. 27 restricting the movement of hardwood trees and shrubs out of a 1/2-mile area centered on the intersection of Macadam Road S. and S. 144th St.

Persons seeking more information on the infestation and tree-removal proposal may call the department's hotline at 1-800-443-6684, or visit the Department of Agriculture's Web site at www.wa.gov/agr/CitrusLHBeetle.htm.

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